

9. Environmental Considerations

The BIMP recognizes environmental concerns as a vital part of holistic beach and inlet management strategies. Environmental considerations can be constraints on strategy choices, projects, or timing of projects, but management strategies can also represent opportunities to preserve, restore, or create habitat. The Coastal Habitat Protection Plan (CHPP) identifies six primary habitats along coastal North Carolina that are vital to the health and function of North Carolina's coastal ecosystems and fisheries. This section identifies the federally protected species, Natural Heritage Program (NHP) Element Occurrences, Critical Habitats, and Significant Natural Heritage Areas. Site specific concerns for each beach and inlet in Region 1 are also identified. Appendix F contains maps of the primary coastal habitats as well as protected species and critical wildlife habitat mapping.

a) Region 1 - Federal Protected Species, NHP Element Occurrences, Critical Habitats, and Significant Natural Heritage Areas

- NHP identifies element occurrences for plant and animal species within Region 1 including the following species that could potentially occur within the identified project study area: seabeach amaranth, shortnose sturgeon, loggerhead sea turtle, green sea turtle, leatherback sea turtle, Kemp's Ridley sea turtle, piping plover, wood stork, and West Indian manatee. A site specific assessment and U.S. fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) coordination should be conducted during project planning to avoid impacts to protected species.
- USFWS identifies May 1 – November 15 as the moratoria period for sea turtle nesting areas.
- Site specific sea turtle nesting data can be obtained from the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission (<http://www.seaturtle.org/nestdb/index.shtml?view=1>).
- USFWS has identified critical habitat areas within Region 1 for the piping plover near Mad Inlet, Shallotte Inlet and Lockwoods Folly Inlet. Site specific information regarding these critical habitat areas can be obtained through USFWS at <http://criticalhabitat.fws.gov/>. Activities within critical habitat areas will require consultation with USFWS. USFWS identifies April 1 – July 15 as the moratoria period for piping plover nesting areas.
- Region 1 contains significant habitat for colonial water birds, wading birds and shore birds. The beachfront of the lower Cape Fear basin is considered an important area used by shorebirds within the southeastern coastal plain. All applicable USFWS and WRC moratoria should be observed.
- Site specific colonial water bird and shorebird data can be obtained from WRC.